

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TPHY OSCIEG
SUBJECT: MRS. SADAT AND AISHA RATEB'S CONFUSION
ABOUT US SUPPORT FOR WAFA WA AMAL PROJECT

REF CAIRO 10340

1. SINCE I CONTINUED TO FEEL UNEASY HOW MINISTER
SOCIAL AFFAIRS AISHA RATEB HAD CONVEYED THE
SUBSTANCE OF MY TALK WITH HER RE USG SUPPORT FOR WAFA WA
AMAL (FAITH AND HOPE) REPORTED REFTEL, I CONCLUDED IT WAS
BEST TO DISCUSS THE MATTER DIRECTLY WITH MRS. SADAT
SO THAT THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT OUR POSITION.
I HAD A CHANCE TO DO THIS TODAY WHEN I MET WITH MRS. SADAT
FOR AN HOUR TO DISCUSS SCHEDULES FOR THE UPCOMING VISIT.

2. I WAS GALD I DID SO, SINCE IT TURNED OUT THAT MINISTER
RATEB HAD NOT YET REPORTED OUR TALK TO MRS. SADAT AND THE FIRST
LADY WAS STILL UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT A "PEOPLE TO
PEOPLE" GIFT OF THE COMPLETED HOSPITAL WOULD BE PRESENTED.
AS GENTLY AS I COULD, I POINTED OUT THAT SOME MISUNDERSTANDING
HAD APPARENTLY DEVELOPED ON BOTH SIDES DURING MINISTER RATEB'S
PERTINENT TALKS WITH USG OFFICIALS. WHILE OUR PEOPLE WERE
ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PROJECT, THEY HAD NOT INTENDED
TO CONVEY THE IMPRESSION THAT THE USG WILL FINANCE THE ENTIRE
PROJECT. WE DEEPLY REGRET THE INADVERTENT CONFUSION AND WANT
AGAIN TO ASSURE MRS. SADAT OF OUR GENUINE INTEREST IN THE
PROJECT. AS I WAS SURE SHE WOULD RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, THE
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PROSPECTS OF OBTAINING CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL FOR A MODEL

CENTER SUCH AS THE WAFA WA AMAL IS INTENDED TO BE ARE NOT VERY GOOD, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT IS OF A TYPE THAT CANNOT BE AFFORDED IN MANY PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES. TO TRY TO PUSH THIS MATTER COULD SIMPLY HURT OUR AID OBJECTIVES FOR EGYPT.

3. IN TELLING HER THIS, I RECALLED SECRETARY KISSINGER'S FREQUENT EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR THE WAFA WA AMAL CONCEPT AND ASSURED HER WE ARE ACTIVELY LOOKING AT WAYS AND MEANS TO SUPPORT THE PROJECT. I MENTIONED THE POSSIBILITY OF USING PART OF CIP LOANS AND OUR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUND TO PURCHASE HARD CURRENCY EQUIPMENT. WE ARE ALSO EXPLORING POSSIBLE PRIVATE FOUNDATION INTEREST AND LOOKING AT OTHER PROSPECTS. I WANTED HER TO BE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT WE WILL DO EVERYTHING FEASIBLE TO HELP MOVE IT FORWARD.

4. MRS. SADAT TOOK MY REMARKS VERY WELL AND WAS APPRECIATIVE. SHE SAID IT WOULD HAVE BEEN NICE TO HAVE HAD SUCH A "PEOPLE TO PEOPLE" GIFT OF THE HOSPITAL, BUT ALSO RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEMS I HAD MENTIONED. SHE SAID SHE WOULD NOT WANT TO APPEAR TO BE BEGGING AND, IF IT IS NOT CONVENIENT, WE NEED NOT TROUBLE OURSELVES ABOUT TRYING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE PROJECT IN CONNECTION WITH THE UPCOMING VISIT. (IT WAS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT SHE WOULD LIKE SOME KIND OF HELP TO COME OUT OF THE VISIT.) SHE WAS SURE WE MEAN IT WHEN WE SAY WE WILL LOOK FOR WAYS TO SUPPORT THE PROJECT AND LEAVES THE MATTER ENTIRELY TO US. IF SHE CAN GET SOME AMERICAN HELP, SHE WOULD LIKE TO SHAME THE "RICH ARABS" IN PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

5. COMMENT: IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER MINISTER RATEB WAS ACTING ON MRS. SADAT'S SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS OR WHETHER THE GOOD MINISTER SIMPLY DECIDED TO TRY TO SCORE A COUP OF HER OWN BY COMING BACK WITH A TOTAL HOSPITAL PACKAGE. I SUSPECT SHE WAS INSTRUCTED TO TAKE SOUNDINGS AND CHOSE TO TAKE THE BIT IN HER TEETH AND RAN TOO FAR. I THINK THE ISSUE IS NOW AMICABLY RESOLVED, AT LEAST WITH MRS. SADAT, WITHOUT ANY EMBARRASSMENT TO EITHER SIDE, BUT SUBMIT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE FIND SOME WAY TO PROVIDE TANGIBLE SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT DURING THE UPCOMING ANNOUNCED SADAT VISIT. MY RECOMMENDATIONS ARE CONTAINED IN CAIRO 10341.

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